

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 12713

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VE

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH FORMER FONMIN CALVANI

1. AS PREVIOUSLY INDICATED, FORMER FONMIN CALVANI, ACCOMPANIED BY DONA ADELA, CALLED ON MRS. MCCLINTOCK AND MYSELF YESTERDAY EVENING. THIS GESTURE IS OF SOME INTEREST SINCE IT WAS ONLY THREE YEARS AGO ON THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR THAT CALVANI SUMMONED ME TO THE CASA AMARILLA AND HANDED ME THE NOTE WHICH ABRUPTLY AND WITHOUT PRIOR WARNING DENOUNCED OUR RECIPROCAL TRADE AGREEMENT. IN OTHER WORDS, OUR RELATIONSHIPS HAVE NOW COME FULL CIRCLE.

2. CALVANI MADE SOME WARM REMAKRS ABOUT MY ACTION HERE AS U.S. AMBASSADOR, SAYING THAT NO PREVIOUS AMERICAN CHIEF OF MISSION KNEW AS MUCH ABOUT VENEZUELA OR HAD SHOWN SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING OF OUR MUTUAL PROBLEMS. HE SAID FRANKLY THAT AT TIMES PRESIDENT CALDERA HAD BEEN VERY DOWN ON ME BUT HAD EVENTUALLY BEEN CONVINCED NOT ONLY BY MY OWN ACTIVITY BUT BY THE REPEATED COUNSEL OF CALVANI AND FORMER AMBASSADOR SOSA RODRIGUEZ THAT I WAS IN EFFECT ACTING TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS OF MY COUNTRY IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE MANNER AND--AND IT SO TRANSPIRED--IN A WAY WHICH ALSO WAS HELPFUL TO VENEZUELA.

3. ON THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE, AS WAS TO BE EXPECTED, CALVANI TOOK A DIM VIEW. HE SAID HE THOUGHT 1975 WOULD BE A VERY DIFFICULT YEAR AND EXPRESSED A FEAR THAT INFLATION MIGHT GROW OUT OF BOUNDS
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BECAUSE OF POLITICAL TEMPTATIONS TO WHICH THE ADECOS WOULD

SUCCUMB AND BECAUSE OF GENERAL BUREAUCRATIC MISMANAGEMENT.

4. AS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PARTY, HE SAID HE AND CALDERA WERE WORKING TO RESTRUCTURE THE COPEYANO ORGANIZATION AND PLANNED TO ESTABLISH NONE SEPARATE REGIONAL OFFICES WHICH WOULD PLACE THE PARTY IN CLOSER CONTACT WITH THE POPULACE.

5. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, HE ADMITTED THAT THE THOUGHT IS ALREADY BEING DISCUSSED THROUGHOUT VENEZUELA OF AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION SO AS TO PERMIT FORMER PRESIDENTS TO RUN FOR RE-ELECTION WITHOUT THE PRESENT INTERDICTION OF A TEN-YEAR INTERVAL. HE SAID IF SUCH A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WERE PASSED, THE NEXT ELECTION WOULD BE A GIGANTIC AND DRAMATIC CONTEST BETWEEN CALDERA AND CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ.

6. AS FOR HIS PERSONAL PLANS, CALVANI SAID HE VERY MUCH HOPED TO ATTEND THE THREE-DAY SYMPOSIUM AT THE FLETCHER SCHOOL ON US-VENEZUELAN RELATIONS. HE SAID THIS WOULD FIT NICELY INTO HIS ACCEPTANCE OF ANOTHER INVITATION FOR JANUARY 30 TO PARTICIPATE IN A PRAYER CONFERENCE ON CAPITOL HILL. THIS APPARENTLY IS A NON-DENOMINATIONAL ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATED IN PRESUMABLY BY MEMBERS OF BOTH HOUSES. HE SAID THAT AT THE LAST SUCH PRAYER MEETING WHICH HE, CALVANI, ATTENDED, THEN REPRESENTATIVE, NOW PRESIDENT FORD WAS LIKEWISE PRESENT.
MCCLINTOCK

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